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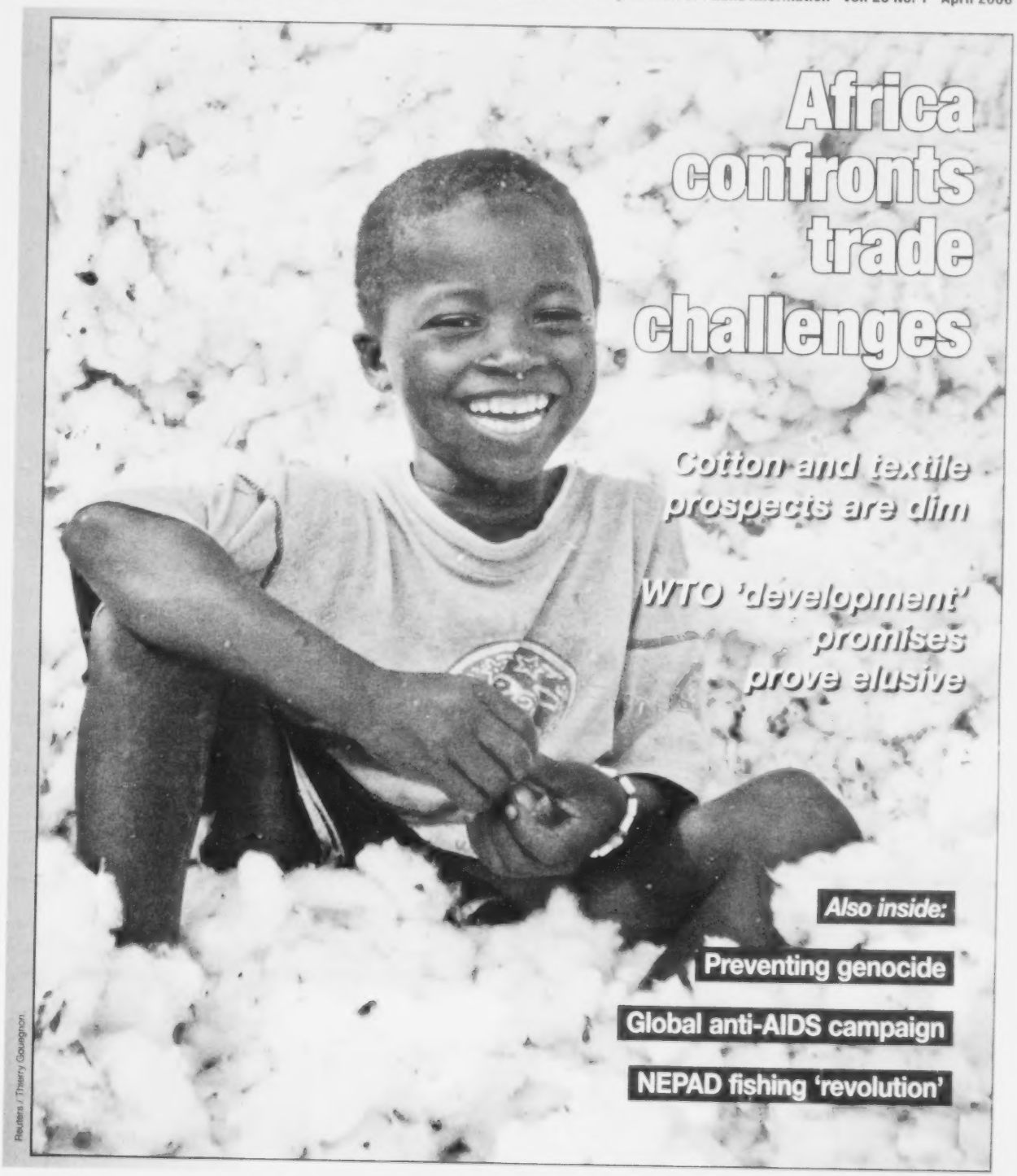

Africa confronts trade challenges

Cotton and textile prospects are dim

WTO 'development' promises prove elusive

Also inside:

Preventing genocide

Global anti-AIDS campaign

NEPAD fishing 'revolution'

Reuters / Thierry Gouegnon

AFRICA RENEWAL

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Correspondence should be addressed to: **The Editor, Africa Renewal Room S-955, United Nations, NY 10017 USA Tel: (212) 963-6857 Fax: (212) 963-4556**
e-mail: africarenewal@un.org

Editor-in-Chief
Julie I. Thompson

Managing Editor
Ernest Harsch

Writers
Gumisai Mutume
Michael Fleshman

Research Assistant
Marian Aggrey

Production
DPI/GDU

Administrative Assistant
Shelly Edelsburg

Distribution
Atar Markman

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Preventing genocide: from rhetoric to action

UN Special Adviser urges firm measures against Darfur slaughter

By **Ernest Harsch**

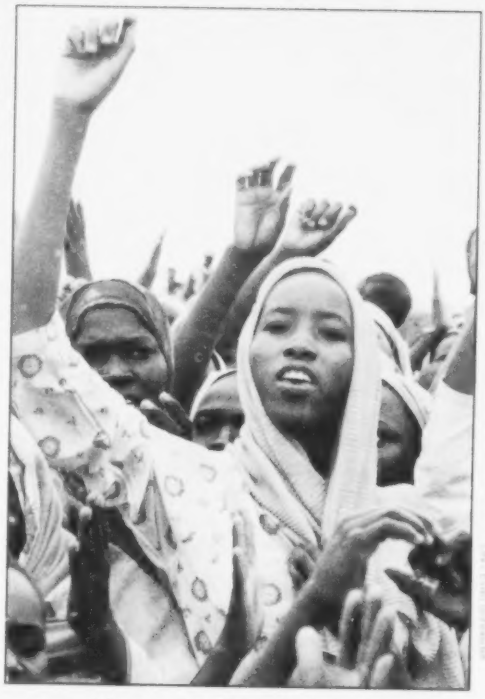
In Sudan's Darfur region, as elsewhere in the world, the international community "must take bold, decisive measures to ensure that genocide does not take place," affirmed the UN's special adviser on the prevention of genocide, Mr. Juan Mendez, on 7 April. Commenting on the anniversary of the start of the Rwanda tragedy a dozen years earlier, he added: "We cannot claim to have learned the lessons of the 1994 Rwanda genocide, if our action in the face of genocidal violence remains half-hearted."

Despite obligations and commitments by world leaders to halt such mass slaughter, "people continue to be targeted for violence and murder solely because of their ethnic origin," Mr. Mendez noted, "most flagrantly" in Darfur, which he has visited twice since his appointment in 2004. In addition to urging the Sudanese government, African peacekeepers and the United Nations to do more to protect civilians from murder, rape and displacement, he called on citizens throughout the world to pressure their leaders "to go beyond rhetoric and act decisively."

100 days

The Rwanda genocide lasted for some 100 days, during which approximately 800,000 Rwandans were slaughtered. Although a UN peacekeeping mission was in Rwanda at the time, its mandate and numbers were very limited – and the UN Security Council decided to reduce it even further. The perpetrators of the genocide therefore faced little international opposition. The killing stopped, in fact, only when a rebel group overthrew the government. An independent commission set up by the UN later concluded that "the responsibility for the failings of the United Nations to prevent and stop the genocide in Rwanda" lay with the Secretary-General, the Secretariat, the Security Council, the peacekeeping mission in Rwanda and the member states.

In 2004, on the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan outlined a plan of action to prevent future genocides. It involved five broad areas of activity: preventing armed conflict, protecting civilians during conflict, ending impunity for those guilty of perpetrating mass slaughter, ensuring early warnings of situations that could escalate into genocide, and taking swift and decision action — by national governments, the Security Council and other bodies — to block the development of genocide or halt it if it has begun.



Displaced villagers in Darfur hoping for tangible support to halt killings.

To help spur movement in these areas, the Secretary-General appointed Mr. Mendez in July 2004. A former political prisoner and prominent human rights activist in his native Argentina, Mr. Mendez bases his work on the 1948 Genocide Convention, a universally binding legal obligation that not only provides for punishing genocide, but also for preventing it.

This emphasis on action to prevent genocide was reinforced at the September 2005 UN World Summit, when the "Outcome Document" unanimously adopted by member states agreed that both national governments and the international community have a "responsibility to protect" people from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Saving lives

In addition to addressing conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and other countries, Mr. Mendez has sought to focus world attention on Darfur. He has noted varying and unofficial estimates that "at least 100,000" have already been killed in Darfur, and perhaps many more.

Thanks to international relief efforts and the presence of a modest peacekeeping force, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), many lives have been saved, Mr. Mendez argued. But drawing on UN reports and his own two visits to Darfur, the special adviser stressed that "much more needs to be done, and urgently."

Secretary-General Annan, in a 9 March report to the Security Council, further underscored the seriousness of the situation. More than 3 million people have been displaced by the conflict, with some 2 million of them dependent on international food and other relief aid. In Western Darfur especially, the situation has in fact worsened since the beginning of the year, Mr. Annan reported. Attacks on humanitarian workers have deprived some 30,000 people of access to relief aid. Fighting has spread into neighbouring Chad, while Chadian rebel groups have moved into Darfur, making an already complex conflict even more volatile.

see page 21

New global anti-AIDS campaign kicks off

Towards prevention, care and treatment for all by 2010

By **Michael Fleshman**

When Jeanette tested positive for HIV at the Kicukiro Health Centre in Kigali, Rwanda, during a prenatal check-up two years ago, "I didn't cry or shout," she told UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) researcher Alexia Lewnes. "But I was afraid. I thought I was going to die." Just a few years ago, she would have been right. Only a tiny fraction of the millions of Africans in need of life-saving anti-AIDS drugs could afford them, and an HIV diagnosis was a death sentence for those who could not.

But Jeanette was more fortunate. Under a UNICEF-supported maternal and child treatment programme at the centre, she was able to obtain life-saving anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) for herself and medication that blocked the transmission of the virus to her baby. Although life remains difficult for Rwandan women a decade after the genocide (see page 6) and Jeanette fears that she will be ostracized if her condition is discovered, she and her children have something she thought she did not have that terrible day at the clinic — a future.

Jeanette and her baby were among the beneficiaries of an emergency drive, known as the "3x5" campaign, to provide ARVs and other medications to 3 million people living with AIDS in developing countries by the end of 2005 (see *Africa Renewal*, April 2004). Launched in December 2003 by the World Health Organization (WHO), the remarkable effort brought ARVs to almost 1.3 million poor and desperately ill people around the world in just two years — an achievement that many public health officials thought impossible. In 2004, an estimated 6 million people globally were thought to need ARV treatment, which is prescribed only for people with advanced AIDS. Some 40 million people are infected with the virus worldwide, 25 million of them in Africa.

Thanks to the 3x5 campaign, the number of Africans on ARV treatment jumped from 50,000 to an estimated 810,000 as governments, civil society organizations, multilateral agencies and bilateral donors made an unprecedented effort to train staff, build clinics and laboratories and purchase medications and equipment.

Although the number of people receiving treatment fell short of the target, the UN's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, Mr. Stephen Lewis, described the campaign as "a breakthrough."

"The inertia around the pandemic was dreadful, until this inspired and visionary intervention," he told *Africa Renewal*. "Now the treatment ethos has taken hold. We have an irreversible momentum in place ... and we're going to get there."

From 3x5 to universal access

The 3x5 effort ended on 31 December 2005. Now WHO and its global partners, including the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, are seeking to build on its success. They have kicked off a new global campaign to bring HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment to everyone who needs it by 2010. Termed the "universal access" initiative, the campaign was launched in January 2006 and is intended to bring the same sense of urgency and commitment to HIV prevention and care that the 3x5 movement did to treatment — combining the three responses into an expanded and integrated assault on the epidemic.

In contrast to the 3x5 campaign and its global targets, the universal access programme emphasizes country-level efforts. Each country is to develop targets and timelines consistent with national AIDS strategies, with greater involvement of civil society, particularly people living with HIV and AIDS, in planning and implementation. The campaign will be directed by a global steering committee mandated to help governments overcome obstacles in four areas critical to the rapid expansion of HIV/AIDS services:

- Ensuring greater and more reliable financing (including from domestic sources) and better alignment of donor funding with national priorities
- Addressing shortcomings in human resources and health systems
- Making available vital goods, such as affordable drugs and condoms, as well as services for testing, monitoring and care
- Working to achieve gender equity in access to HIV/AIDS services and promoting efforts to end stigma and discrimination against people living with the virus.

The need for a rapid and integrated response is clear. Despite the 3x5 drive, increased funding for global AIDS programmes and encouraging progress in a few countries, the global epidemic continues to worsen. In 2005, there were an

'Fight like hell' for universal access, says Stephen Lewis

Speaking to *Africa Renewal*, Mr. Stephen Lewis, the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, dismissed as "balderdash" suggestions that the 16-fold increase in the number of Africans on lifesaving anti-AIDS drugs has come at the expense of essential prevention programmes. He also rejected the notion that compromises have to be made when allocating scarce resources. "There is this constant feeling that you have to be pushed into a corner and pick treatment over prevention or prevention over treatment. People have to absolutely lose that mindset . . . and say, as everybody in the world knows, that both are vitally important. You just keep fighting like hell to get the money you need for everything. You never give up and you don't accept anything less."

Before the 3x5 campaign, he recalled, many senior public health and UN officials believed it was impossible to treat people in poor countries. "They said, 'They're going to die anyway. Let's use the money for prevention.' I used to respond not with an appeal to compassion, but by saying that there is no way you can stop 40 million people who are infected from demanding treatment. So don't tell me they're going to die. You're going to do treatment whether you want to or not. You're running into the face of history and history will run right over you."

estimated 5 million new infections and 3 million deaths — the highest number ever. Africa continues to bear the brunt of the epidemic, accounting for more than 60 per cent of all people with HIV, 60 per cent of all new infections and 70 per cent of deaths last year. Women have been hit hardest, representing 57 per cent of Africans living with HIV and AIDS.

Africa embraces new campaign

Meeting in Brazzaville in early March under the auspices of the African Union, more than 250 representatives from government, civil society and women's organizations, as well as people living with AIDS and youths from 53 African countries, embraced the initiative. They linked it to the continental New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and pledged to "put people at the centre of the HIV and AIDS response," particularly women, young people and the soaring number of AIDS orphans. "We are ever mindful of the disproportionate share and severe impact of the HIV and AIDS burden in Africa," the delegates declared. They noted that the pandemic is driven by "deep and persistent poverty, food insecurity, indebtedness . . . gender inequality and stigma and discrimination."

The Brazzaville Declaration* urged African governments to increase domestic spending on the pandemic, including by devoting at least 15 per cent of national budgets to health services. That is a goal that only three African countries have reached, reports UNAIDS. The declaration also called on donors to support national AIDS programmes with coordinated and reliable funding to avoid duplication, piecemeal support for favoured projects and uneven distribution of resources across geographic and social sectors.

The delegates also called for greater regional cooperation against the disease, including through bulk purchasing of medicines, condoms and other supplies, consolidated training and monitoring programmes and the promotion of local manufacturing of needed goods by the creation of larger, regional markets.

Road map or backlash?

But with time running out for the nearly 5 million people still unable to obtain ARVs and other medicines, some activists are questioning whether the universal access campaign will lose the focus and urgency of its 3x5 predecessor.

Mr. Gregg Gonsalves, director of prevention and treatment advocacy for the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York, told *Africa Renewal* that he is concerned about the lack of numerical targets and timelines in the universal access programme. "There are no targets, no road maps, no accountability mechanisms and no core indicators. The whole global ambition to fight the epidemic has been scaled back."

Where the 3x5 treatment drive stirred controversy with its ambitious target and its numerical goals and time-frames, Mr. Gonsalves continued, universal access "is entirely too vague." Leaders of multilateral health institutions and donor governments, he asserted, do not want to take risks. "We're in a 3x5 backlash."

But Mr. Michel Sidibe, co-chair of the campaign steering committee, argued that targets and timelines are best set by countries, to account for local conditions and priorities. "The ownership has to be at country level," he said from his office in Geneva. "They can't be set outside a country context, because we don't have one AIDS pandemic in Africa, we have many. Mali has an HIV infection rate of less than 1.5 per cent. You can't have the same programme for Botswana with a 40 per cent infection rate. Countries are best positioned to allocate resources for the greatest impact."

'Mobilization Works'

Mr. Sidibe, the director of country and regional support for UNAIDS, praised the 3x5 campaign for reaching more than 1 million people globally. "It proves that mobilization works." But he also noted that this figure was dwarfed by the 5 million people newly infected with HIV in 2005. "We need to come with a holistic approach, emphasizing prevention, care *and* treatment," he emphasized. "We have been using a piecemeal approach for 20 years."

Mr. Sidibe also observed that the universal access campaign has drawn inspiration from NEPAD's innovative African Peer Review Mechanism, in which member states monitor and evaluate each other's economic and political policies (see *Africa Renewal*, February 2003). The campaign will similarly involve African governments in assessing each country's progress in the battle against the virus. By building bridges among governments, civil society, the private sector and the international community, he concluded, the world can finally turn the corner on HIV and AIDS "and do it in a comprehensive and sustainable manner." ■

* *http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2006/20060317_UA_Brazzaville_en.pdf*

Rwandan women: AIDS therapy beyond drugs

Food and hope are also essential to survival

By **Stephanie Urdang**
Kigali

For Grace and her daughter Juliette, the anniversary of the April 1994 Rwanda genocide means one thing: they have lived with HIV for a dozen years, and their disease has progressed to AIDS. Grace was among the estimated 250,000 women who were raped at the time and is one of the untold numbers of women who were infected with HIV as a result. Juliette, now eight years old, is also infected.

Until recently Grace was living in abject poverty, trying to cope with the stigma associated with being HIV-positive and with the daily worry that there would be no one to look after Juliette after her early death.

At first, when Grace began to get sick, she found it inconceivable that she had AIDS. Those who carried out the genocide "murdered my husband and left me to die slowly from their AIDS," she said. She found it equally inconceivable that there were drugs that could fight the disease. "In my case, only God, who knows that it wasn't my fault that I caught this sickness, could perform a miracle and heal me."

Grace and her daughter, like Josiane, Didacienne, Triphonie and other women in her situation, have now found that they do not have to wait for miracles to occur. All have been able to benefit from the Rwandan government's commitment to providing anti-retroviral (ARV) therapy to those who need it — and for those who cannot afford it, at no cost.

These women are among the estimated 6 million Africans living with HIV/AIDS who are in immediate need of anti-retroviral medicines, out of a total of nearly 26 million HIV-positive people in the region.

Recent data from Rwanda's 2005 Demographic Health Survey indicates an estimated overall adult infection rate of 3 per cent nationally. Earlier estimates by the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) for 2003 placed the prevalence rate in the towns at 6.4 per cent and in the rural areas at 2.8 per cent. The programme's *Global Report* for 2004, also using 2003 figures, estimated that some 250,000 Rwandan children and adults up to the age of 49 are living with HIV (figures for adults over 49 were not available). Of those, 22,000 were estimated to be children under the age of 15. Of particular concern is the high prevalence rate among young women between the ages of 15 and 24, five times the rate among young men of the same age group.

"Even if the [ARV] drugs were available, most of the women we interviewed were too poor to afford the food needed to take the drugs."

— Ms. Rakiya Omaar, director, African Rights

Wide treatment coverage

The Rwandan government, with financial support from a variety of sources including the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, bilateral donor agencies and private funds such as the Clinton Foundation, is able to provide ARV treatment to about 40 per cent of the people in need. Doctors and nurses are being trained, and a growing number of health clinics are able to treat AIDS patients. The estimated 19,000 people living with AIDS under treatment by December 2005 represented one of the highest coverage rates in sub-Saharan Africa.

This is particularly impressive in a country where 66 per cent of the population live below the poverty line and where the majority of households are unable to produce enough to feed themselves, even though 91 per cent rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Rwanda's food crisis remains chronic. It is even more severe in the context of HIV/AIDS, presenting a challenge to the ultimate success of the government's treatment and care programme.

That programme involves not only medical and resource questions, but also interlocking issues of poverty, stigma and gender inequality. Because of these issues, access to ARVs is often not a reality for those who are the most marginalized and in greatest need of the medicines.

Poverty means going hungry. Hunger leads to malnutrition and a more rapid breakdown of the immune system. Social stigma against those with the disease means that many do not get tested in the first place. And gender inequality puts burdens on women that they cannot shake off on their own. Those burdens include responsibility for caring for children and other family members, ensuring that limited food supplies go first to hungry children and the risk of abandonment by men when an HIV-positive status is disclosed. Pivotal to all these issues is the need for food, a need as urgent as the drugs themselves.

Food a daily challenge

Sister Speciosa, a nurse and nun, is confronted with the reality of food every day as she provides treatment, care and counselling to AIDS patients at Butare Hospital, two hours drive from Kigali. "It is not only that they need the food to take with the medicine and that they need to eat more than they did when they were sick to get healthy," she says. "It's that their appetite increases. Some of my patients say they don't want to take the medicine because it makes them so hungry."

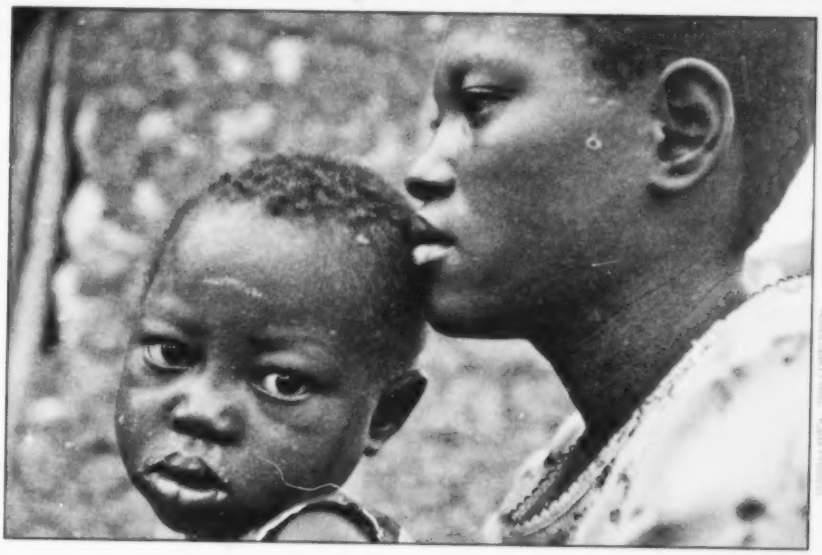
Although eligible for free tests and medication because of their lack of income, many find that the daily circumstances of their lives make it impossible for them to use those services. The lack of food or money for transport, difficult housing conditions, pervasive stigma, the stress of believing they will die without providing for their children's care — all serve to accelerate a downward spiral into despair and hinder their access to ARV drugs, even when those drugs are free. Because women are primarily responsible for feeding their children and their families, they are most deeply affected by this inability.

Dr. Anita Asiimwe, coordinator for care and treatment at the Treatment and Research

AIDS Centre, a government agency, also cited the food question in an interview with *Africa Renewal*. "It is clinically established that patients need to take their drugs with food," she said. "It's a dilemma for us, as *everyone* needs food. Is it right to only provide food for those on the drugs? What about everyone else who doesn't have enough to eat?"

She illustrated her point with an anecdote about a child whose mother couldn't afford to send her to school. The child, knowing that children of people living with AIDS had their school expenses covered, asked her mother why she wasn't HIV-infected so that she could go to school too.

"Would women," Dr. Asiimwe wondered aloud, "be encouraged to become infected in order to feed their children?" At times, she says, she has to try not to be despondent about the difficulty of providing for all those in need. "I have to remind myself," she said, "of how far we have come, and not despair about how far we still have to go."



Many Rwandan women and girls infected with HIV/AIDS are now getting supplemental food with their medicines.

'We cannot eat pictures'

The Ministry of Health's Nutrition Unit is fully aware of the need for a healthy diet for people living with AIDS, whether they are being treated with ARVs or not. In a recent interview for an assessment financed by the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and undertaken by African Rights, a non-governmental organization, the ministry's secretary-general, Dr. Ben Karenzi, stressed that the government is not oblivious to the importance of nutrition in the fight against HIV/AIDS. However, he also underscored the huge challenge of maintaining an ongoing food support programme, particularly in the absence of adequate funding.

A woman living with AIDS cited in the same assessment highlighted this difficult reality. "They show us pictures of all the food we would love to eat, but we cannot eat pictures.... We have to have the means to purchase or produce the food. Visit us in our homes and see how we live. Then you will understand."

Rape survivors

The experiences of Grace, Triphonie, Josiane and Didacienne attest to a critical need, not only for the availability of anti-retrovirals, but for more general support to enable the women to access the drugs. They were among some 200 rape victims who survived the genocide, many of whom were infected with HIV as a result, whose testimonies were included in a UNIFEM-funded report published by African Rights in 2004, *Broken Bodies, Torn Spirits*.

Ms. Rakiya Omaar, director of African Rights, told *Africa Renewal* that the most compelling issue that emerged from the the testimonies was not only women's dire need for anti-retrovirals and medication to treat opportunistic infections, but the difficulty in accessing them consistently.

"What became very clear to us was that even if the drugs were available, most of the women we interviewed were too poor to afford the food needed to take the drugs," she said. "If they did get some food they gave it to their children, as they couldn't eat when their children were hungry even if it was a matter of their own life. They also had no money for transport to the clinics. They worried incessantly about their horrendous living conditions, the desire to send their children to school. They were plagued by high levels of stress, not only for these reasons, but because they worried about their children when they were no longer around, which they knew was inevitable without ARVs."

What was especially painful to her, she added, was that a number of women cited in the report have already died. Every month she hears of more deaths, even though ARVs are now more available.

Little grounds for hope

Triphonie's story was typical. She grew thinner and sicker and her children went hungry as she tried to cope with living in a crowded, open army warehouse, rushing back and forth between her market stall and her four children to check on their safety. Her stall was rapidly failing, exacerbating the hunger.

Josiane lost four children to the *interahamwe*, the militia force that led the genocide. She has suffered debilitating memory loss. She was living in an unprotected shack without the means to pay for food or transport. Her 11-year-old daughter was a product of the rape and like her was living with AIDS. When her daughter got sick, Josiane would carry her to the hospital on her back. Although her CD-4 count called for them, doctors would not prescribe anti-retrovirals for Josiane because of her memory. "I was always confused," she told *Africa Renewal*. "I did not know the day of the week or the time of the day."

Pills, food and seeds

Many health centres in Rwanda were finding that although they were providing ARVs to women who needed them, they were not getting the results they hoped for. The women visiting the clinics complained of extreme hunger and were disheartened by their inability to obtain the food they needed. And so seven clinics, funded by the US Agency for International Development and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture, have begun an innovative programme. One of these, in Gitarama Province, has been particularly successful.

According to African Rights, the first step was to provide fortified SOSOMA (a nutritious mixture of sorghum, soya and maize) to the women to help them regain energy. The next step was to involve them in growing their own food crops. The project is based on the introduction of indigenous vegetables and tuberous seeds, which are well adapted to Rwanda's climate and soils. With this comes training in soil fertility, crop diversification and the use of hardy seeds.

To get women living with AIDS interested in the programme, Mr. Hodali Jean Gatsimbanyi, the coordinator, cultivated a demonstration plot next to the health centre. He encouraged the women to harvest the produce for their family's consumption during their visits to the centre. Then he distributed seeds to the women for planting in their home gardens, passing on tips and monitoring their progress. In order to join the project, the women were encouraged to form associations, known as *amashyirahamwe*. The project in Gitarama began with 50 women and soon grew to 90 as the results started to become evident.

Once the project was underway, the centre found that the health of the majority of the participants improved considerably. They gained weight, opportunistic infections have been reduced and in some cases the participants look healthier then people who are not HIV-positive. There is also a spin-off effect in the community. Community members in general have shown greater interest in acquiring the seeds and cultivating their own plots and the women in the programme have been encouraged to impart their new knowledge and skills to non-participants in their villages.

Grace, unable to support all four of her children, sent Juliette to boarding school. Juliette stopped taking her anti-retrovirals because she worried that her classmates would find out about her HIV status. Very ill, she was sent back to Butare. There she lay in hospital, unable to eat the hospital food, while Grace sobbed by her bedside, with no money to buy food Juliette could eat and frantically worrying about her three hungry children alone at home.

Didacienne would walk 10 kilometres to the nearest clinic when she was ill, a distance that, in her frail state, took her many, many hours. She could not afford the equivalent of US$0.60 for the bus that passed near her house on the outskirts of Cyangugu twice a week on market day. Not long before *Africa Renewal* interviewed her at her family homestead, she had spent weeks in the hospital. When she recovered and returned, she found that her small but well built house had been totally dismantled by her late husband's relatives. They explained that they thought she was going to die and therefore sold everything, including the bricks and roofing, to pay for the funeral. Didacienne and her children share a shed that housed the cooking hearth with one goat and a growing number of rabbits.

'Gift for Life'

These particular women have been fortunate. They have benefited from a small programme started by African Rights, called Gift for Life, that provides food and other basic necessities to women involved in the testimony project. The support is intended as a five-year bridge to self-sufficiency. Other organizations are also providing food to women in similar straits.

As a result, Triphonie has moved to secure living quarters minutes from the market and her stall is flourishing. Josiane's "permanent" memory loss is improving now that her stress levels are diminishing; she is taking anti-retrovirals and is planning a small business enterprise while her daughter, healthy on her anti-retrovirals, is attending a nearby school. Juliette was found a space in a local high school and Grace has found some work, and all live at home where there is enough food for all the family. Didacienne now has transport money to go on regular visits to the clinic to monitor her disease; she is getting stronger every day.

Anti-retrovirals generally make an enormous difference to physical health. But without food and other related support, they may not make a difference to mental and emotional health. Women who receive anti-retroviral therapy *and* food and who are able to cover the cost of transport to the clinics are finding they have the physical and emotional energy to turn their lives around. Most of the women in the African Rights programme, for instance, have opened bank accounts, a sign that they are planning for their future.

The UNIFEM assessment points out that when women living with AIDS are given food support to relieve their immediate hunger and to regain their energy, they then often request assistance for income-generating activities and skills to develop alternative livelihood strategies or to turn their failing enterprises around. "A combination of food availability and anti-retroviral therapy," says the report, can ensure that women living with AIDS "lead a productive life, become less burdensome on their families and communities and put less strain on the health system."

UNIFEM, in partnership with African Rights and with the encouragement of the Ministry of Health, has started an advocacy campaign to address the critical link between food and anti-retroviral therapy in Rwanda. The campaign regards treatment not only as a health issue, but as a critical path towards women's economic empowerment and self-confidence.

Triphonie, who was at risk of dying before African Rights came into her life, sat in the living room of her new home, her two youngest children eating with gusto out of a large bowl of nutritious rice and beans placed before them on the floor. She reflected on the changes in her life: "Only now am I able to no longer regret that I survived the genocide." ■

Africa starts a fishing 'revolution'

NEPAD plan promotes poverty reduction, food security and environmental sustainability

By **Ernest Harsch**

Africa's small-scale fishers want environmental protection, higher incomes and a greater voice

Agnès Poupart, Max Gerbaldi

At the base of the Zomba plateau in southern Malawi, more and more villagers are digging ponds to raise fish. Mr. James Chitonya previously grew maize, with meagre returns. But since he began practicing "fish farming" (also known as "aquaculture") several years ago, he has earned enough from fish sales to replace his thatched grass hut with a house that has electricity and an iron-sheet roof. "I am also able to pay school fees for my children and buy them clothes," he told a local reporter. "In addition, I have bought some livestock from the sales of fish."

Several thousand kilometres away, in the village of Nianing on Senegal's coast, hundreds of women clean and smoke the 50 tonnes of fish caught annually by kinfolk and neighbours, who venture into the Atlantic in canoes. The women's processed fish is sold to residents or to companies for export to Asia, principally Japan. Concerned that overfishing was beginning to deplete the stocks of offshore fish, Nianing's fishers and fish processors welcomed support from the Senegalese government and the Japanese aid agency to improve management of fishing, the village's economic mainstay. Not only are these artisans now better organized than they were a few years ago, but they have learned to observe prohibitions against catching certain species at given times of the year, so the fish have time to replenish their numbers. Since the project began, the value of Nianing's total fish output has increased by almost half.

Initiatives such as these must be replicated across Africa if the continent is to harness the full promise of its fisheries to strengthen national economies, reduce poverty and improve people's food security and nutrition, argue promoters of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The continent-wide plan, first adopted by African leaders in 2001, is intended to accelerate Africans' own development efforts, draw greater benefits from external economic dealings and advance good governance, peace and security.

Since NEPAD's advent, teams of experts have begun developing action plans for specific sectors, such as agriculture, health and the environment. At a special Fish for All summit meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, in August 2005, African leaders launched the "NEPAD Action Plan for the Development of African Fisheries and Aquaculture."

In a concluding summit declaration, the leaders expressed alarm over the depletion of Africa's fish stocks, the degradation of its aquatic environments and threats to the sustainability of its fisheries and aquaculture, especially as the demand for fish is rising sharply. To overcome such challenges, they vowed action to realize "increased benefits from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture."

In Senegal, as elsewhere in Africa, "Fishing is on the way to revolutionizing itself," Minister of the Maritime Economy Djibo Kâ stated just a few days after the Abuja summit. Such a revolution is all the more urgent, he added, because the fishing sector as a whole is "in crisis."

A stagnating resource

Although fishing in much of rural Africa tends to be overshadowed by agriculture and stockraising, it is not a marginal sector. Fishing provides direct incomes for about 10 million people — half of whom are women — and contributes to the food supply of 200 million more.

According to the WorldFish Centre, an independent research institute headquartered in Malaysia, Africans rely on fish for an average of 22 per cent of their consumption of animal protein. In some countries, the rate is as high as 70 per cent. Fish also provides essential vitamins, minerals, fatty acids and other nutrients crucial to a healthy diet. The poor rely on fish more than others, because it is often the most affordable source of protein.

Fishing also makes a significant economic contribution. In Uganda, for example, lake fisheries yield catches worth more than $200 mn a year, contributing 2.2 per cent to the country's gross domestic product. They employ 135,000 fishers and 700,000 more in fish processing and trading, and generate $87.5 mn in export earnings.

Overall, African fish exports increased notably during the 1980s and 1990s. By 2001 they reached a value of $2.7 bn

– about 5 per cent of the total global trade of $56 bn. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), fish products make up more than 10 per cent of the total value of national exports in 11 African countries.

Photo: Jacob Silberberg

Half of all those employed in Africa's fishing sector are women.

But under current fishing practices and management methods, Africa's marine and inland fisheries are reaching their limits. Too many fish are being caught, so stocks are dwindling. Mr. Daniel Pauly, a researcher at the University of British Columbia in Canada, estimates that with the tripling of fishing activity in northwest Africa since the 1970s, the amount of fish in deep waters has fallen by a quarter. Off West Africa, deep-water fish stocks have declined by half. "This trend is also evident farther south," he says, "along the African coast down to Namibia."

The NEPAD Action Plan observes that during the 1980s and 1990s, fish caught in marine and inland waters increased steadily, rising to an average of 7.3 mn tonnes. But output has stagnated since then, reaching only 6.8 mn tonnes in 2002.

Mr. Claude Martin, director-general of the World Wildlife Fund International, notes that a decline in fish output could seriously affect local food security. "A collapse of fish stocks in West Africa," he said, "can have more serious human consequences than in Europe or North America," the destinations for most of the region's fish exports.

Towards sustainability

Through negotiated agreements between European and African governments, hundreds of European vessels fish annually off Africa's coasts. These agreements stipulate the types and volumes of fish that can be caught and the royalties and fees the foreign ships must pay to operate in African waters.

But many African countries lack sufficient boats, aircraft, communications equipment and trained personnel to effectively monitor the activities of foreign vessels, to make sure they do not overfish. Sometimes African governments, eager to earn foreign revenue, simply agree to let European fleets catch more fish than they should.

The NEPAD Action Plan argues that in marine fisheries, "arrangements that regulate the access of foreign fleets to African fish stocks need to be considered from a long-term perspective on fish supply and economic development opportunities."

In recent years, a number of African governments have been taking a tougher line when negotiating foreign fishing agreements. In addition to prohibiting fishing during certain times of the year and limiting the overall catch, the new agreements often channel part of the fees paid by the foreign vessels towards strengthening African countries' surveillance capacities. Since many fishing zones cross maritime boundaries, neighbouring African countries are also working more closely together to improve monitoring and resolve any disputes that may arise.

Getting foreign ships to operate more responsibly is only part of the challenge, notes Mr. Arona Diagne, president of Senegal's National Association of Fishers. "Senegalese boats plunder more of the sea's resources than do foreign ships," he admits. "When fishers come across a school of fish, they want to take them all." One solution, Mr. Diagne argues, is to teach them to fish more sustainably. Another is to invest in fish-processing enterprises, cold storage units, marketing facilities and other infrastructure that will increase incomes and minimize losses, thereby easing the economic pressure to catch so many fish.

Overall, argues the NEPAD Action Plan, African governments need to work together with the private sector to channel more investment into various forms of infrastructure. In both coastal and inland fisheries, these would include landing sites, cold units, road and transport systems and marketing facilities. To make sure that fishing better helps reduce poverty, it is also important to target enterprise-support programmes, credit institutions and technical assistance towards small-scale fishers and women fish processors.

Across the continent, says the plan, African countries need to develop their capacities to catch and process their own fish. This will help ensure that "revenues and economic rent generated by the sector are reinvested into development interventions."

Involving communities

Reforming the way fisheries are managed will also be essential for bringing more of the sector's benefits to those who do the actual work. In the development of both national and local policies, notes the NEPAD plan, there is currently a "general underrepresentation of fishing communities in the decision-making process."

Therefore, it states, governments must act to build the capacity of all stakeholders to engage in fisheries management; develop "co-management plans" that include government ministries and agencies, the private sector, associations of fishers and fish processors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and create decentralized government structures with transparent mechanisms of control and audit.

Failing to work with all local actors can have dire consequences. In the mid-1990s, this writer visited Kétonou, a fishing village near the coast of Benin. A group of leading villagers, with funding from a French environmental NGO, had created a restricted fish "park" in the marshes.

Fishing there was only allowed by permit, supposedly to prevent overfishing and safeguard sustainability. In fact, the project was run by two "deflatés" (retrenched former civil servants) and traditional elders. They and a small group of better-off villagers received permits, while the big majority of poor villagers were excluded.

Tensions of a different sort emerged in the Senegalese fishing town of Kayar in June 2005. Local residents, who had long observed fishing restrictions, became frustrated when the authorities did little to stop seasonal fishers from further north from violating the prohibitions. Their anger broke out in a day of violent protests and clashes with police that left 30 people injured and one dead. In such cases, community participation in decision-making could have helped resolve the conflict before it spiralled out of control.

Aquaculture: 'sector of the future'

Improving the efficiency and sustainability of Africa's marine and inland fisheries will help boost overall production to some extent. But they alone will not be able to meet the continent's growing domestic demand for fish nor increase exports on a significant scale. The NEPAD Action Plan therefore singles out aquaculture as the sector with the greatest potential for expansion.

Fish farming has been practiced in Asia for hundreds of years. It was introduced into Africa more than a century ago, but with only a very modest impact here and there. Only in the last decade or so has aquaculture begun to take hold, with overall production rising from 80,000 tonnes in 1990 to more than 530,000 tonnes in 2003 (see graph). But this is still only a small fraction of the continent's total fish output.

By far the greatest contribution to Africa's increase in aquaculture production has come from Egypt, which produced about 400,000 tonnes in 2004. By combining traditional aquaculture techniques, improved management of water resources and the private initiative of thousands of small enterprises involved in production, marketing and servicing, Egypt is now able to meet about half of its national demand for fish from aquaculture.

Nigeria is Africa's second-largest producer of fish from aquaculture, with more than 30,000 tonnes recorded in 2003. Madagascar comes next, with under 10,000 tonnes.

Even in countries where production is still very low, as in Mozambique, which produced just 855 tonnes in 2003, the sector is winning greater attention. Fish farming, says Ms. Isabel Omar, an aquaculture expert in Mozambique's fisheries ministry, "plays an important role in the socioeconomic development of the country" by improving people's diets through the provision of low-cost protein, creating jobs and enhancing rural incomes.

According to studies by the FAO, about 9.2 mn square kilometres (31 per cent of the land area) of sub-Saharan Africa is suitable for smallholder fish farming. If the yields achieved in recent fish-farming projects can be maintained on a wide scale, devoting only 0.2 per cent of this land area to aquaculture would be sufficient to meet a third of Africa's additional demand for fish by 2010.

The experience of aquaculture ventures in Africa indicates that attempts to introduce fish farming as a separate activity generally do not have a great impact. But when fish farming is combined with crop cultivation or stockraising, villagers are more willing to adopt the practice. Yields also tend to be much higher. Crop residues can provide nutrients to help the fish mature, while runoff of enriched water from fish ponds can help fertilize crops. Irrigated rice farming provides many such opportunities.

If aquaculture output can grow by an average of 10 per cent a year, argues a technical paper distributed at the August 2005 Fish for All summit, then Africa will be able to reach about 3 mn tonnes over the next 15 years. Such growth could create at least 5 mn additional jobs, help feed millions more and yield another $50 mn–$100 mn in export revenues.

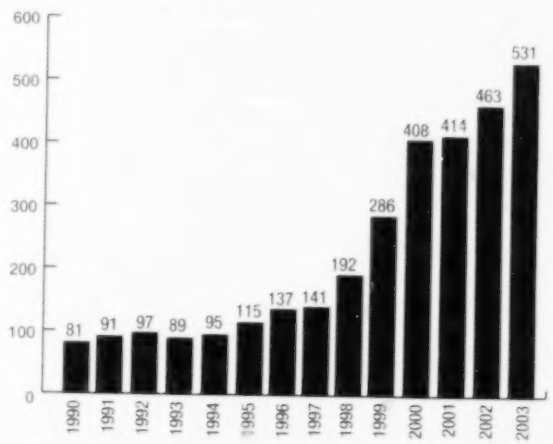
According to Mr. Ká, Senegal's maritime economy minister, experts have identified about 700 high-potential aquaculture sites in that country. Of those, only 59 are now being exploited, many directly linking fish farming with rice cultivation. Nevertheless, he says, fish farming is "the sector of the future."

In January, Senegalese Prime Minister Macky Sall inaugurated the stocking with about 70,000 "fingerlings" (very young fish) of three large fish basins near the town of Tivaouane. He announced that the government had just approved an allocation of CFA18.5 bn (about US$35 mn) for aquaculture, towards a goal of developing 7,500 fish ponds, with an estimated yield of 100,000 tonnes, by 2010.

The stocking of the basins, Mr. Sall said, marked the beginning of a "new era" in Senegal's fishing industry. "The challenges of sustainable development require new approaches in the search for solutions to the acute problem of food security." ■

Growing aquaculture production in Africa

thousands of tonnes



Source: UN Africa Renewal from "Hidden Harvests: Unlocking the Potential of Aquaculture in Africa," a NEPAD technical review paper, August 2005.

Tapping women's entrepreneurship in Ghana

Access to credit, technology vital for breaking into manufacturing

By **Efam Dovi**
Accra

"It has been a very long journey," says Leticia Osafo-Addo while making her regular morning inspection of her factory. "I thought about giving up several times and going back to nursing." She is the chief executive of Processed Foods and Spices Company, a medium-scale business in Tema, an industrial zone just east of Ghana's capital, that will soon be set to produce nearly US$90,000 worth of goods per month.

Photo: Issac Torkor

Most businesswomen in Ghana are stuck at the "micro" level, unable to expand because they lack credit and new technologies.

Ms. Osafo-Addo is now one of thousands of women business owners in Ghana. But her journey to success began 23 years ago. She started off in her kitchen by making just 10 jars of black pepper sauce for friends. The chili sauce, popular in Ghana, is known as *shito*. Ms. Osafo-Addo's was a success and demand for it grew. She sought and found additional training, including an integrated capacity-building programme initiated by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for promoting sustainable small- and medium-enterprises.

Moving the business out of her kitchen and into formal premises proved a long, challenging process marred by debt, frustration and government inaction. The biggest hurdle was securing capital. Interest rates, sometimes as high as 50 per cent, made bank credit impossible. In 2001, she landed in debt due to delayed payment from her biggest client, the Ghana Armed Forces. But that year also proved to be a turning point. The Ghana Investments Promotion Centre facilitated the acquisition of 51 per cent of her company by an Austrian soup-making firm, increasing its value and thus enabling it to secure loans from two government ministries. That in turn meant she could refurbish a rented industrial site, and the factory opened in January 2006.

Stuck at the bottom

Ms. Osafo-Addo's story of success is unusual. But her struggle is common to many of Ghana's women entrepreneurs. About 80 per cent of women-owned businesses are stuck at the "micro" level. They are unable to expand because they lack properly coordinated support, cheap and long-term credit and sufficient access to new technologies. They face poor infrastructure, low capacity and sometimes obstructive government policies.

According to World Bank estimates, most businesses in Ghana, which account for 70 per cent of employment in the country, fall within the categories of "micro," "small" and "medium" enterprises. They range from farming activities, agribusiness, light manufacturing such as textiles and garments, and arts and crafts. However, due to neglect, this sector has suffered greatly over several decades, contributing to a nationwide shift from productive entrepreneurship to petty trading.

A look around supermarket shelves and village market stalls shows one of the reasons. Thanks to trade liberalization, cheap imports of every product, from tomato puree and fruit juice to toothpicks and clothing, can be easily bought, providing stiff competition for local businesses.

Because of such challenges, says Ms. Christy Banya, a programme analyst with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the government should take firm action. "Local businesses need to be protected."

She also notes that the banks appear more willing to give loans to importers of cheap products than to local manufacturers. The importers sell their produce quickly, at higher returns. But home-grown businesses require more time to turn a profit and to repay their loans, so the financial institutions shy away from them.

As in Ms. Osafo-Addo's case, the challenge of finding much-needed capital has stalled the growth of Lucia Quachey's clothing manufacturing company. Using her own resources, Ms. Quachey had built up her small-scale export business, but the sharp devaluation of Ghana's currency in the 1980s contributed to a dip in her profits. Replacing obsolete machines, hiring labour and investing in raw materials

all require capital she is unable to obtain because of high interest rates and other factors.

Currently, commercial bank interest rates hover between 20 and 25 per cent. Moreover, banks want collateral, which many women do not have, either because of social factors or the seasonal nature of their businesses. Says Ms. Quachey, who is also president of the Ghana Association of Women Entrepreneurs (GAWE) and general secretary of the African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs: "You need technology, long-term loans to invest in equipment and working capital that will enable you to use those machines, make money and then be able to pay back the loan." However, she adds, successive governments have failed to pay adequate attention to these factors. A recent survey by the Ministry of Trade and Industry revealed that few women-owned businesses in Ghana are able to access new technologies.

Ghanaian women generally do not face problems in starting businesses on a subsistence basis. The difficulty has always been in developing them beyond that level, to graduate in scale from micro to small. This is where help is most needed. In an effort to address the issue, the government recently launched the Venture Capital Trust Fund to help invest in small- and medium-scale enterprises, known as SMEs.

Social handicaps

But women's business groups worry that their members might not be able to tap into the fund. "At the end of the day, only big businesses will be able to access these funds, because the information doesn't flow to the ground, where the majority of the women are illiterate," says Ms. Quachey. "Resources may be available, but they may not be accessible to women at all, because culturally and socially, women are handicapped." She cites women's multiple roles. They are expected to look after the home and family, which impedes their progress in vocations outside the home.

In addition, Ghana's prevailing social norms affect the ability of women-owned businesses to function as bigger, male-dominated businesses do. Many deals are conducted in hotels after business hours. In a country where women are still largely regarded as home-makers, the question frequently pops up: "What is a married woman doing in a hotel with some men?"

Ms. Quachey also cites prevalent "old boyism" in business circles. These are overwhelmingly male-dominated, and there are simply too few women at the top to encourage other women to strive to break in.

Ms. Gifty Boahene, chief executive officer of Fairgreen Ltd., an information technology company, believes that times are changing and that perceptions of women doing business outside the home will change as well. But she adds: "We are not there yet. I have seen married women who had to go out of their way to introduce their male business colleagues to their husbands," to reassure the husbands that their relationships were strictly professional. Other marriages simply fall apart.

Targetting women

Several attempts have been made by the government and its development partners to promote SMEs, but most initiatives have been general and do not specifically target women-owned businesses. Where the programmes do focus on women, the attention has been focused mostly at the subsistence and micro levels, in the context of other developmental concerns.

GAWE is advocating programmes specifically aimed at helping women-owned businesses to grow, with at least 40 per cent of resources specifically targeted towards firms owned by women.

Ghana's political history has not been encouraging for entrepreneurship in general. Decades of military rule in the 1970s and 1980s drove away many local and foreign entrepreneurs. Now, with a stable political atmosphere and the goodwill that the country enjoys with the international community, industry activists are hoping the government will implement policies to encourage business growth. Such an approach could help create a shift from subsistence to micro businesses, from small to medium and from medium to large. This would in turn provide many opportunities for women-owned businesses to grow and flourish.

A wind of change may already be blowing in favour of women-owned businesses. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs has a new scheme, the Women Business Support Programme, 2005-2010, which is aimed at selecting women-owned manufacturing businesses for receipt of long-term support.

In April 2006, UNDP is starting a four-year development project for micro, small and medium enterprises. It will focus on complementing micro finance with business development services, including capacity-building and advice. About 60 per cent of the resources will go into sectors in which women predominate. Where necessary, the project may guarantee loans to these businesses.

Market reforms

The government, with donor support, is also implementing a programme of market reforms through a private-sector development strategy that runs to 2009. The goal is to achieve widespread private-sector growth throughout the country by enhancing competitiveness and reducing the risk of doing business in Ghana. Under the programme, a number of institutional reforms are underway within the legal, financial and public sectors.

Mr. John-Hawkins Aseidu, deputy director at the Ministry of Private Sector Development, said that although these reforms do not specifically target women-owned businesses, their nature should eventually promote women's entrepreneurship. For example, the operation of the Registrar General's department has been decentralized and its capacity enhanced, so the registration of new businesses should be speeded up.

"Establishing practical and workable legislation is an essential part of assisting and encouraging women to consider starting and running their own business," said Mr. Patrick S. Frederick, head of a UK-based business consulting agency and co-founder of the African-Caribbean Busine : Network, who was quoted in a local magazine. "This is a hugely under-tapped resource that should be addressed and not overlooked." ■

Trade talks: where is the development?

In North and South, critics see "Doha round" as a run-around

By **Michael Fleshman**

It was a close thing. But after six days of arm-twisting, all-night bargaining sessions and closed-door meetings in Hong Kong, an eleventh-hour concession by Europe on farm subsidies saved the December 2005 summit meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) from another embarrassing collapse. The European move kept the troubled global trade liberalization talks, launched at Doha, Qatar, in 2001, alive — but just barely. UK Trade Minister Alan Johnson described the agreement reached in Hong Kong as only "one step up from failure." Even WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, who praised the 13–18 December summit for bringing the talks "out of hibernation," conceded that negotiators were barely past the halfway point a year after the round was supposed to be finished.

Four years after the industrial North promised that Doha's central purpose would be to aid the world's poor, many African and other developing countries are beginning to question not just the outcome in Hong Kong but the fairness of the global trading system itself. In their view, key parts of that development agenda have been shunted to the back burner of the negotiations or ignored entirely. The mounting scepticism of the South was reflected by African trade ministers meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, on 24 November, when they denounced the talks for "failure to deliver any tangible results on development issues, despite the characterization of the work programme launched at Doha as a development round."

With negotiations scheduled to resume at WTO headquarters in Geneva on 30 April, a growing number of economists, trade experts and non-governmental advocates in both the North and the South are echoing the ministers' assessment — questioning not just how to turn up the heat on development issues, but whether the concerns of developing countries were ever on the stove at all.

The Doha agenda

The decision to label the Doha process a "development" round reflected the new assertiveness of poor countries at the WTO. The trade group's 1999 meeting in Seattle ended in failure, in part because developing countries, led by Africa, refused to launch talks on new issues until inequities in the previous trade agreement, known as the Uruguay Round, were fixed. To secure consent on talks in areas of concern to them (see *Africa Recovery*, December 2001), developed countries agreed in Doha to include a number of "development" issues of particular concern to Africa, including:

- Correcting the inequities of previous trade agreements;
- Eliminating Northern agricultural subsidies, totalling some $350 bn annually, which depress world prices and bring unfair competition with unsubsidized African produce;
- Strengthening "special and differential treatment" provisions that allow flexibility in how poor countries adjust to WTO agreements;
- Improving access by developing countries to consumers in rich countries, including duty-free access for the exports of the 50 nations designated as "least developed countries" (LDCs), 33 of which are in Africa;
- Expanding "aid for trade" to help African countries produce more for export, improve skills and efficiency in trade-related institutions and defray the cost of complying with WTO rules.

The absence of progress on this "Doha Development Agenda" led to the collapse of the 2003 WTO summit in Cancun, Mexico, when frustrated developing countries again rejected new talks. Continued deadlock in the vital negotiations over agricultural subsidies and inaction on most other development issues seemed likely to doom the Hong Kong meeting as well. "Development outcomes in each of the negotiating areas remain the raison d'etre of the round," the African trade min-

isters cautioned. "Tangible development results at Hong Kong must be evident."

Their message was reinforced by a statement to the Hong Kong meeting by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 13 December. "Development — real gains in real peoples' lives — remains the primary benchmark for success of the Doha Round," he declared. "Whatever other smaller steps your negotiations achieve, development must large is the standard against which your efforts will be judged."

> Four years after the industrial North promised that Doha's central purpose would be to aid the world's poor, many African and other developing countries are beginning to question not just the outcome in Hong Kong but the fairness of the global trading system itself.

Devil in the details

The last-minute announcement by European Union Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson that the EU would eliminate farm-export subsidies by 2013, combined with acceptance of a package of modest benefits for the LDCs, promises of increased funding for "aid for trade" and limited moves by Washington to address the particular demands of West African farmers injured by US cotton subsidies (see box page 16), was enough to salvage the negotiations.

In return, African and other poor developing countries agreed to expanded talks over liberalization of services, a longstanding European and US objective. Developing countries also agreed to further cuts in industrial tariffs under a formula that could see them open their markets to imported manufactured goods more rapidly than will the US, Europe and Japan. The issue, explained Benin's chief trade negotiator, Ambassador Samuel Amehou, is not whether it was necessary for developing countries to compromise at Hong Kong, but whether the overall deal advances their economic interests and contributes to development.

The full answer, like the devil, lies in the bewilderingly complex details of the agreement, many of which must still be negotiated. Nevertheless, a number of analysts in both the North and the South argue that, in virtually every sector, Hong Kong was a setback for Africa's development goals and a betrayal of the promise of the Doha agenda.

In agriculture, trade expert Aileen Kwa told *Africa Renewal*, "developed countries really didn't do anything on their subsidies, besides making much of the European end date" of 2013. Ms. Kwa, a member of Focus on the Global South, a non-governmental research and advocacy group, noted that the EU offer applied only to export subsidies, totalling €3 bn annually, while €55 bn in domestic and other types of subsidies are classified as "non-trade distorting" and will therefore continue.

The same is true of US farm subsidies, she asserted. "There is almost no actual reduction. You really can't separate out domestic production from export production, so virtually all subsidies end up being export subsidies, and that hurts small farmers" in poor countries.

Setback in tariffs, services

The deal on industrial tariffs is no better. At the Hong Kong summit, developing countries reluctantly agreed to a formula for reductions that could require poor countries to cut levies on manufactured goods more rapidly than wealthy states. African trade ministers argued that structural adjustment programmes and bilateral aid agreements outside the WTO framework have already forced deep reductions in their tariffs and that further cuts are both unfair and unwise.

The agreement, Ambassador Amehou told *Africa Renewal*, "will not serve the development of our countries. We also want to get industrialized. ... We have told our [developed-country] colleagues that we have already done a lot because of IMF and World Bank conditionalities. We should not have to do more than we have done. It will lead to the de-industrialization of our countries. We are afraid the world will overwhelm Africa with their goods."

In services, developing countries sought greater access to Northern markets for labour-intensive service industries such as construction and shipping, in which low wages give them a competitive advantage. They also sought to preserve development-friendly aspects of the old rules that allowed them to shield weak industries like banking and tourism from international competition. Instead, Ms. Kwa noted, "developed countries got what they wanted ... quite far-reaching negotiations over whole sectors of developing country economies," without making matching concessions.

Coming up short

An agreement to give duty- and quota-free access to 97 per cent of LDC exports to Northern markets was hailed as a major breakthrough at Hong Kong. But even that, critics say, is more symbolism than substance. The offer sounds good, said Mr. Tetteh Hormeku, the programme director for the Africa secretariat of the non-governmental Third World Network, but even 100 per cent duty-free access for LDC exports counts for little if countries have little to trade. Although about one in eight of the world's people live in a least developed country, the economies of those countries typically produce few products for trade and account for barely half a per cent of global exports.

As it is, Mr. Hormeku said that the maintenance of tariffs on the remaining — but significant — 3 per cent renders the agreement virtually meaningless. "That 3 per cent potentially allows developed countries to lock the LDCs out of their markets." Under the agreement, he pointed out, a developing country like Zambia could have the right to export duty free to the US aircraft and computers — items Zambia does not manufacture — "but not things like copper and rice that they actually produce."

Helping LDCs increase the diversity and quality of their exports would enable them to take greater advantage of the agreement. Towards that end, developed countries announced expanded "aid for trade" programmes as part of the LDC package. But once again, poor countries' interests came up short.

Zambia's chief negotiator, Ambassador Lowe Mtesa, spoke for many African governments when he told reporters at the sum-

mit: "Economic liberalization . . . has led to unemployment and closure of Zambian companies. If aid for trade is to make sense it must address supply-side constraints" — that is, by helping poor countries increase the number and quality of products available for export. Industrialized countries emphasized instead that expanded aid programmes are intended to assist poor countries implement WTO rules.

"This aid for trade doesn't address

Reuters (Luc Gnago)

Picking cotton in Côte d'Ivoire. African farmers still suffer from US and European subsidies.

our core problems," Benin's Ambassador Amehou concurred. "I will give the example of my country. We used to export shrimps to the European market, but last year we got problems with phytosanitary [health] requirements. We don't have the laboratory to make the inspections." Helping Benin build and equip the necessary inspection facilities, he said, "is a practical example of how aid can help us. You can get the best rules, but if you can't produce, you can't take advantage."

Business as usual

African countries also failed to make headway in efforts to correct damaging inequities and imbalances in existing trade rules, a problem known as "implementation issues" in WTO parlance. African demands for "special and differential" treatment (S&D) provisions — intended to give poor countries greater flexibility in applying WTO rules — fared no better.

The failure of developed countries to address poor countries' concerns about implementation issues and S&D contributed to the collapse of the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle. Since then, Mr. Hormeku noted, developing countries have made more than 200 separate proposals for modifications in existing agreements and improvements to S&D. By the end of the Hong Kong meeting, however, only five were adopted, including a temporary exemption on rules governing trade-related investment and language "urging" donors not to undermine S&D measures through bilateral aid and loan conditionalities. Even these modest concessions are limited solely to the LDCs.

On balance, said Ambassador Amehou about Hong Kong, "the final results were really below our expectations. We were expecting more in agriculture, on LDCs and S&D. But we only got small progress in export subsidies, small progress for the LDCs and nothing special on implementation issues."

Northern agricultural subsidies were Africa's primary concern, he continued, "and on domestic subsidies Africa was really expecting results. But nothing was done! We want to continue negotiations in Geneva to get something better, but that will depend on the political will of the US and EU." Right now, he declared, "the negotiations are suffering."

More than four years after the beginning of the "Doha Development Agenda," the ambassador said, it is hard to take the label seriously. "Where is this 'development' round? Does it still have meaning to speak of a development round when we don't have S&D? No good provisions for the LDCs? Where the aid for trade is not practical? We don't see anything really to tackle these issues and boost the economies of the developing countries. In the end, it's business as usual."

Overall, asserted Mr. Hormeku of the Third World Network, "trade liberalization has not been beneficial to African economies. We have not improved our location in the global economy. We have not moved out of dependency on primary commodities. We have not moved into more efficient provision of manufactured goods and services. We are on the receiving end of the global economy, which is repatriating our resources and locking in IMF and World Bank conditionalities through trade agreements.... What we have at the moment is a trade paradigm that African countries should open up all sectors of their economy to foreign providers in a context that destroys the basis for domestic produc-

Hard landing for African cotton

For years West Africa's 10 million cotton farmers have demanded an end to nearly $5 bn in domestic and export subsidies for US cotton that have driven down world cotton prices and reduced the farmers to desperate poverty. African demands were led by the "Cotton Four" — Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali — which rely on the fibre for 40 per cent of their annual export earnings. They called for the elimination of some $644 mn in US export subsidies for cotton by the end of 2005, an 80 per cent reduction in nearly $4.3 bn of domestic subsidies by the end of this year and the elimination of remaining payments by 2009. Most US cotton subsidies were ruled illegal by a WTO dispute panel in 2005. Africa sought compensation for financial losses, estimated at $250 mn annually, along with improved technical assistance and market access.

What they got instead was agreement by the US and other developed countries to eliminate export subsidies by the end of 2006 and reduce "trade-distorting" domestic payments faster than for other crops as part of an overall trade deal. The US also offered to increase technical assistance from $2 mn to $7 mn annually and to provide duty-free access for West African cotton. Critics point out that tying reduction of US domestic subsidies to a successful conclusion of the entire Doha round of talks could leave them in place for years despite the WTO ruling. They also argue that $7 mn in aid is poor compensation for $250 mn in annual losses. Benin's chief trade negotiator, Ambassador Samuel Amehou, dismissed Washington's market-access offer, noting that it is subsidies, not tariffs, that make African cotton uncompetitive in US markets.

tion and jobs. It can never lead an African country out of poverty."

Vanishing benefits

The sceptics' arguments have been strengthened by the failure of the global trading system to deliver prosperity and economic development for the African poor. By most measures, Africa is poorer, less industrialized and less of a contributor to world trade than in 1986, when the launch of trade talks in Uruguay marked the beginning of the modern era of trade liberalization. Twenty years later, new research by the World Bank has led some economists to conclude that Africa may have failed to reap the promised benefits of free trade because they were never really there.

In 2003, a study by the World Bank predicted that successful completion of the Doha talks would generate a staggering $832 bn of new wealth by 2015, with most of that amount, $539 bn, going to developing countries — enough to lift 144 million people out of poverty. The figures were widely cited by trade negotiators, journalists, anti-poverty advocates and senior UN officials in urging poor countries to liberalize more quickly.

More recent research, however, casts grave doubts on the earlier, rosy estimates and raises new questions about the value of trade liberalization as a development tool for poor countries. In advance of the Hong Kong meeting the World Bank reported that, under ideal conditions, including such unlikely developments as the elimination of all tariffs and agricultural subsidies and full global employment, Doha would generate $287 bn in new wealth by 2015 — just a third of the 2003 estimate. Under this admittedly unrealistic model, developing countries would gain just $90 bn, or 31 per cent of the benefits, with the balance going to wealthy countries.

When more realistic assumptions are used, the same researchers concluded that Doha would produce only $96 bn in total gains — with $80 bn flowing to the industrialized North and just $16 bn to the developing South.

Far from Africa being able to "trade its way out of poverty," a detailed analysis of the World Bank report by two US researchers, Timothy Wise of Tufts University and Boston University Professor Kevin P. Gallagher, found that the Bank's "realistic" analysis of a Doha agreement would increase the average income of each citizen in a developing country by less than one US cent per day and reduce the global poverty rate by less than half a per cent. "Hardly a good advertisement for this so-called 'development round' of global trade talks," they observed.

Moreover, half of the expected gains, some $8 bn, would go to only eight countries: Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam. The LDCs, with the smallest and weakest economies, would likely benefit the least. The costs and losses associated with continued liberalization are spread more widely, however. Wise and Gallagher, citing additional World Bank studies, estimated that the administrative cost of complying with WTO-mandated requirements in just three areas — food sanitation, intellectual property and customs reforms — would average $130 mn per year for each poor country, for a global total of some $4.4 bn.

Deep cuts in tariffs could also prove costly for African and other developing countries. According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), tariffs generate about 20 per cent of government revenue in developing countries. That figure is far higher than in developed countries and represents a vital source of funding for health, education, infrastructure and other development programmes. Depending on the final outcome of negotiations on tariff reductions, UNCTAD estimates that revenue losses in poor countries could reach $60 bn.

'Liberalization hinders development'

The failure of trade liberalization to deliver on its development promises is leading a growing number of economists to question whether trade liberalization helps or hurts the poor. Dr. Thomas Palley, an economist at Yale University, wrote in early 2006: "Mainstream policy economics has been gradually lowering its claims about the positive impact of trade on development and poverty reduction.... A decade ago, mainstream policy economics argued vigorously that trade promotes development. If this were true, given the massive increase in global trade over the last 25 years, the global economy ought to have experienced accelerated growth. Instead, global economic growth has actually slowed relative to the prior quarter-century. This suggests that trade is at best only weakly associated with growth" and even more weakly with poverty reduction.

In a Washington-based publication, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, Dr. Palley argued that while growth is necessary to reduce poverty in developing countries, it is not sufficient. "Increased welfare rather than growth is the real goal of economic policy," he observed. The claim that increased trade automatically reduces poverty "is belied by the increasing income ratio of North to South.... The widening wealth gap is prima facie evidence that any beneficial trade effect is at best weak."

Arguing that poor countries should consider abandoning free-trade development models in favour of protecting and developing their domestic markets, Dr. Palley cited recent research to conclude that expanded trade is a result of development, rather than a cause of development.

Bad faith

The World Bank's former senior economist, Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, is also questioning the link between development and free trade. "As chief economist of the World Bank, I reviewed the Uruguay Round of 1994 and concluded that both its agenda and outcomes discriminated against developing countries," he wrote in December 2005.

"Both as it was conceived, and even more as it has evolved, today's development round does not deserve its name," he continued. "Many of the issues that it has addressed should never have been on the agenda of a genuine development round, and many issues that should have been on the agenda are not.... Those in the developing world who believe that there has been a history of bargaining in bad faith have a strong case."

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Loss of textile market costs African jobs

Diversification, efficiency hold key for economic recovery

By **Gumisai Mutume**

All across Africa, textile producers and exporters are reeling from the impact of new trade rules that took effect in January 2005. The rules, negotiated at the World Trade Organization (WTO), opened up to market forces a sector that had been protected for more than 30 years. It did so by ending a quota system in industrial nations which as a side effect had provided a ready market for textiles and apparel from poor African and other developing countries.

The phasing out of the old system has already cost Africa more than 250,000 jobs over the last few years, reports the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF), leaving more than a million family members without stable incomes. Most jobs have been lost in Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, Nigeria, Ghana, Mauritius, Zambia, Madagascar, Tanzania, Malawi, Namibia and Kenya.

At a recent meeting of the Africa branch of the ITGLWF in Cape Town, South Africa, union members called on African governments to convene an urgent continental conference on the future of the clothing, textile and footwear industries. Its purpose would be to enable governments, trade unions and investors to develop plans to respond to the current crisis by increasing efficiency in the sector, attracting investment and improving workers' welfare.

The old quota system, known as the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA), had limited textile and clothing exports by producing countries to the world's biggest markets, in the US, Canada and European Union (EU). Its primary aim had been to protect those countries' domestic textile industries from more efficient producers emerging in Asia. However, by doing so, the system also gave advantages to many smaller textile-exporting countries that were less constrained by quotas or enjoyed preferential market access into the EU and the US. As a result, their textile exports to the industrial world thrived.

Operating a spinning machine at an Eritrean textile factory. In face of stiff competition, it is not easy for African manufacturers to modernize their operations.

But with the end of the old system, these same countries are now finding themselves squeezed out of the market by unfettered competition with giant, highly efficient producers in countries such as China and India.

Demise of a side effect

European countries, Canada and the US originally set up the MFA in 1974 to protect their indigenous clothing and textile industries by capping the amount any country could export to them. The World Bank says that those quotas served to protect jobs in industrial nations and resulted in the loss of 19 million jobs in developing countries, mostly in Asia. The MFA, however, had an unanticipated side effect. Because rich country markets were growing much faster than domestic producers could satisfy, a major opening in the clothing market was created — and smaller textile-producing countries found a ready market.

But as trade liberalization policies began to spread across the globe, the old Asian producers began arguing that quotas were an unfair restraint on trade. Large retailers in industrialized nations added to the pressure, saying the system forced them to buy from too many different sources — in some cases from up to 50 different countries. This mounting pressure coincided with international negotiations for a new trade regime, known as the Uruguay Round, which took place from 1986 to 1994.

The large Asian textile producers and the Northern retailers ultimately won the day. In 1994, the WTO set up the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, providing for a phased removal of all quotas

in the sector within 10 years.

At first, many developing countries celebrated the liberalization of the textile sector, seeing it as an opportunity to improve trade. It was estimated that opening up the sector would generate an additional $175 bn worth of textile and clothing exports. But as the deadline drew nearer, smaller textile-producing countries began to realize that most benefits would not come to them, but to countries with large and highly developed textile industries.

Lesotho: from gains to losses

Lesotho provides a telling example of the grave impact of the expiration of the MFA. The country's manufacturing sector is highly dependent on textiles and garments, which account for the most jobs after the public sector and earn more than 75 per cent of all export earnings.

Under the MFA, major Asian textile companies, limited in exporting directly to the EU and the US, set up subsidiaries in less developed countries, including Lesotho. In particular, they took advantage of Lesotho's easy access to the US market under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) of 2000, which offered duty-free entry to some products from African countries that adopted market-based economic policies, introduced political pluralism and eliminated barriers to US trade and investment. As a result, textiles and clothing became Lesotho's economic mainstay, which at one point employed 56,000 workers — thus accounting for virtually every manufacturing job in the country.

"Most if not all our foreign investors come from Asia, mainly Taiwan and China," notes Mr. Daniel Maraisane, head of the main clothing workers' union. But with the end of the quota system, he adds, those investors "say it's now easier and cheaper to manufacture in China and India. So they are starting to go back home.... There's simply no way little Lesotho can compete with such giants."

By the end of 2004, six of the country's 50 clothing factories closed, leaving 6,600 workers without jobs or termination benefits. The surviving companies, faced with shortfalls in export orders, placed 10,000 workers on short-term work, using them only when needed. "If things go on like this," says Mr. Maraisane, "we are afraid that unemployment, which already stands at 40 per cent, will end up reaching 70 per cent."

The China effect

For decades, the flow of textiles from the world's largest producers, such as China, India, Hong Kong, the Taiwan province of China and the Republic of Korea, had been tightly restricted in the largest markets — the EU and US — because those industrialized countries were alarmed at the rapid growth of Asian garment manufacturing industries. These Asian countries were producing textiles so cheaply that they threatened to undercut American and European producers.

But when China, the world's biggest textile producer, joined the WTO in 2001, and the MFA restrictions later fell away, the world trade in textiles and garments faced unprecedented competition. The National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO), grouping the main textile manufacturers in the US, reports that within the first three months of 2005 — immediately after the lifting of the quotas — imports of cotton trousers from China shot up by 1,500 per cent and of cotton shirts by 1,350 per cent. In Europe, "the increases in the import of certain categories of clothes exceeded 2,000 per cent during the first quarter of 2005," notes ITGLWF General Secretary Neil Kearney.

Behind this surge lies an ambitious plan by China to make its textile and apparel sector the dominant player in world trade. Over the last 15 years, the government poured tens of billions of dollars into the sector "in the form of free capital, direct and indirect subsidies and a host of other 'incentives' to drive competitors out of the markets and create an environment where no one, including the lowest-cost producing countries in the world, can compete with China in world markets," NCTO President Cass Johnson told a recent US Congressional hearing on US responses to China's dominance.

Analysts expect that with the expiry of the MFA, jobs lost in other developing countries will instead move to more competitive producers such as China and India.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), China exported $31 bn worth of textiles between January and April 2005, an 18 per cent increase over the same period the year before. Chinese textile exports to the US and EU, now freed of quotas, increased by 250 per cent and 84 per cent, respectively.

Alarmed by the influx, in May 2005 the US government imposed temporary restrictions on textiles and clothes imported from China, affecting about $2 bn worth of goods. Such restrictions are permitted under "safeguard" clauses that China signed when it joined the WTO. Any WTO member can use the clauses to provisionally limit rises in imports from China until 2008. At that point, the full impact of the end of quotas will be felt. When that happens, as many as 27 million people, mainly in the small producing countries, could lose their jobs, notes a submission to the WTO by a group of affected developing countries that includes Madagascar, Mauritius and Uganda.

Most analyses of the impact of the phasing out of quotas "conclude that China and India will come to dominate world trade in textiles and clothing," notes Norwegian researcher Hildegunn Kyvik Nordås in a paper prepared for the WTO. China alone could capture 50 per cent of the US market, now worth $90 bn. Overall, international textile and apparel trade currently amounts to about $400 bn annually.

Limited options for Africa

Like the US, African countries could invoke "anti-dumping" measures to temporarily restrict Chinese exports until 2008, notes Mr. Mills Soko, a researcher at the South African Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg. This narrow window of opportunity could provide a little more time for African textile producers to improve efficiency and competitiveness and add more value to their exports by, for example, producing more high-end textile products.

A number of African countries began taking such steps before the end of the quotas. Kenya's government, for instance, removed taxes on all cotton ginning and textile manufacturing machinery in 2002,

Jenny Matthews / Integrated Eye

African producers can aim for high-end niche markets abroad, such as those that emphasize African designs.

to encourage imports of more modern equipment. The government also dropped taxes on goods and services to cotton ginning factories and improved incentives to lure textile companies into its export processing zones (EPZs). These are specially created industrial areas that offer investors a host of incentives, such as tax exemptions and the ability to move funds freely into and out of Kenya.

By December 2004, clothing enterprises in Kenya's EPZ employed 34,614 workers "in 30 world-class factories," says Ms. Margaret Waithaka of the EPZ Authority. Thanks to the improvements in the sector and to growing demand in the US, apparel exports from Kenya to the US increased from $44 mn in 2000 to $226 mn in 2004, she reports, making Kenya the second-largest exporter of clothing to the US from sub-Saharan Africa. But for many countries, including Kenya, such improvements will not be sufficient to enable them to withstand the heavy competition of the post-MFA era.

Diversification

Another option, says Mr. Soko, would be for African countries to move away from overdependence on textiles and clothing, into other goods that are in demand. For example, he notes, African countries should not see China entirely as a threat, but also as an opportunity for developing new export markets by taking advantage of its "insatiable demand for commodities."

South Africa has been doing just that over the last few years, benefitting from sales of mineral products and metals to China. With one of the world's fastest growing economies, China is the world's largest consumer of oil and a major importer of cotton — accounting for 33 per cent of world consumption. Some African countries have begun negotiating duty-free entry of their products into the Chinese market in exchange for reduced obstacles to Chinese investment in Africa. The continent's trade with China grew from $10.6 bn in 2000 to $13.5 bn in just the first nine months of 2003.

"The potential for expanding this bilateral trade and for strengthening Africa's economic engagement with other fast-growing developing economies (such as India and Brazil) . . . is enormous," says Mr. Soko. But to realize that potential, African countries first need to move away from relying on one or two products for most of their export revenue.

The UN Economic Commission for Africa, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, recommends that African states provide cheap credit and other incentives to enterprises that manufacture a wide range of goods for export. As a strategic starting point, they should begin processing local raw materials into finished products for export, the commission reports. Instead of exporting raw cotton or cloth, for example, countries could develop industries that produce high-end clothing products. This could include trying to supply niche markets for garments with African designs.

To diversify their exports, African countries will need significantly improved access into international markets, says Mr. Gobind Nankani, the World Bank's regional vice-president for Africa. That would require reducing "protectionist practices, such as subsidies, in foreign markets," under negotiation in the current round of WTO global trade talks.

The continent would also benefit from a reduction of barriers in non-agricultural sectors, especially in other developing-country markets, Mr. Nankani says. For example, "some countries in Latin America heavily protect their own garment manufacturers and other labour-intensive manufactures, reducing the opportunity for African produce and other exports to penetrate those markets." In many East Asian countries, he adds, tariffs are far more protectionist than in the EU or US.

Adjust or perish

"African governments have an obligation to help their private sectors adjust to new conditions to retain their competitiveness," argues Mr. Soko. They could learn from countries such as Bangladesh, where the government joined forces with domestic companies, trade unions and non-governmental organizations to develop and implement policies to upgrade skills and retrain displaced textile workers.

Small, vulnerable African producers are faced with two choices, he says: "They must either improve their efficiency or switch to higher-tier products." For example, India increased its cotton-based exports to the US by an estimated 46 per cent by shifting production from basic cloth to higher-value textile products and fully manufactured clothes.

Producers who want to be competitive

Benefits of AGOA eroding

Under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) signed into law in the US in 2000, the textile exports of 38 eligible African countries enjoy tariff and quota exemptions if they meet certain rules. Those include a requirement that the product's raw materials originate either in the exporting country or in the US. But African nations categorized as least developed (with per capita incomes of $1,500 or less in 1998) are exempt from even that restriction. Their products are allowed duty-free access into the US market under only one condition: that the final assembly of the textile products takes place in the exporting country, no matter where the yarn spinning, fabric weaving or knitting occurs.

Because of AGOA, US imports from Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius and South Africa increased by 66 per cent between 1999 and 2001. In 2003, Africa exported $1.2 bn worth of clothes and textiles to the US, a 50 per cent increase from the previous year. So far, the ability to make duty-free exports to the US has been a significant advantage for AGOA countries. Average US tariffs in the sector amount to 17 per cent of the landed value of products, with cottons averaging 13 per cent and synthetics 25 per cent.

Theoretically, AGOA countries still hold an advantage in certain areas freed from quota restrictions. For example, products made from synthetic fabrics are charged average tariffs of 25 per cent if they are imported from non-AGOA countries. Experts argue that countries seeking to sustain their textile industries need to diversify into such niche markets. However, in sub-Saharan Africa the only country so far producing synthetic yarn is South Africa, since developing such an industry requires massive injections of capital.

The majority of the AGOA countries' textile products will be undercut by the phasing out of MFA quotas, since duty-free access alone does not give sufficient competitive advantage against goods made more cheaply by the dominant textile-producing countries.

According to a study by the US Trade Commission, Africa's overall share of US apparel imports will fall, "notwithstanding AGOA preferences." Already, during the first three months of 2005, textile and apparel exports from Africa to the US fell to $270 mn, from $370 mn during the same period the year before, when the MFA quotas were still in effect.

can only do so if they lower their production costs, Mr. Soko adds. A Chinese firm with a subsidiary in Mauritius notes that the costs of buildings, electricity, fabrics and labour are much higher in Mauritius than in China. Another reports that while wages are lower in Madagascar, other costs, such as transport and electricity, are higher.

The World Bank estimates that the cost of doing business in Africa is 20–40 per cent above that for other developing regions, due to high regulatory costs, unsecured land property rights, ineffective judiciary systems, policy uncertainty and unfair competition from politically connected companies, which results in a few large firms holding very dominant market shares.

Inadequate and high cost infrastructure services are also a hindrance. The World Bank reports that if the Zambian and Kenyan power systems were of the same quality as their Chinese counterparts, for example, the cost savings for Zambian and Kenyan firms would be equivalent to nearly their entire wage bills.

For many African textile and apparel producers, time to upgrade their industries before competition heightens is running out. The US and EU have proposed completely phasing out tariffs on textile and apparel imports by 2015. At that point, the tariff advantages that countries currently enjoy under AGOA will no longer apply, a move that could destroy the remaining textile and apparel industries in Africa, says Mauritius's ambassador to the US, Mr. Usha Jeetah.

Both the US and EU "have had hundreds of years to develop their apparel and textile industries, protected by very high tariff barriers and quotas," notes Mr. Jeetah. "What is being asked of the small and infant industries in Africa is that they will have 10 years in which to develop [their industries] . . . to be competitive with long-established countries." ■

Trade talks

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In an essay entitled "Fair Trade for None," he noted, "Unsurprisingly the rich countries' negotiators throw around big numbers when describing the gains from even an imperfect agreement. But they did the same thing last time, too. Developing countries soon discovered that their gains were far less than advertised, and the poorest countries found to their dismay that they were actually worse off."

With negotiations to complete the Doha round looming, the economist cautioned, "Will the benefits — increased access to international markets — be greater than the costs of meeting rich countries' demands? Many developing countries are likely to come to the conclusion that no agreement is better than a bad agreement, particularly one as unfair as the last." ■

Preventing genocide

from page 3

The time for strengthening the peacekeeping presence in Darfur "is now," said Mr. Mendez, "when the security situation in Darfur is getting worse and attacks on civilian populations are spilling over into Chad." This could take the form of a stronger AMIS or a future UN peacekeeping mission, to which the African Union has agreed in principle. As of early March, AMIS had 6,900 personnel in Darfur — too small to cover such a vast area.

Mr. Annan has urged donors to respond to the African Union's appeals for more financial and logistical support, while the UN has initiated contingency planning for a possible transition to a UN mission. However, reported Mr. Annan, Sudanese government authorities have organized demonstrations against the UN in various parts of Darfur to protest such a mission.

Mr. Mendez has noted that government consent for international involvement in protecting populations under threat "will always be preferable." But international action may also include, in limited cases, "non-consensual means when governments are unwilling or unable to protect their own citizens." ■

AFRICA AGENDA

2–4 May 2006, Cape Town (South Africa) – Housing Africa: An International Investment Conference, sponsored by the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). Tel (1-866) 636-4729, e-mail <opic@mfmgroup.com>, website <www.trademeetings.com>

10–15 May 2006, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) – 39th Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, under the theme "Meeting the challenge of employment and poverty in Africa." Contact Sophia Denekew and Meron Aberra, tel (251-11) 544-5098/3098, fax (251-11) 551-0365, e-mail <ecainfo@uneca.org>, website <www.uneca.org>

15–18 May 2006, Cape Town (South Africa) – Championing Agricultural Successes for Africa's Future: A Parliamentarians' Dialogue on NEPAD. Contact Thaninga Shope-Linney, tel (27-11) 313-3776, fax (27-11) 313-3778

17–21 May 2006, Nairobi (Kenya) - ICTe Africa 2006. Organized by the NEPAD Council and Africa Telecommunication Union and featuring presentations on the next generation of networks, infrastructure projects, Internet applications, rural telephony and ICT policies. Contact Alida Phielix, tel (27-83) 588-5823, fax (27-86) 687-1736, e-mail <aphielix@nepadcouncil.org>, website <www.nepadcouncil.org/ICTeAfrica2006/index.html>

22–25 May 2006, Johannesburg (South Africa) – African Banking Congress 2006. The conference aims to promote the harmonization and integration of African banking. Contact Brian Shabangu, tel (27-11) 463-6001, fax (27-11) 463-6903, e-mail <brian.shabangu@terrapinn.co.za>, website <www.terrapinn.com/2006/bankza/>

9–13 June 2006, Abuja (Nigeria) – African Fertilizer Summit: Meeting Africa's Fertilizer Challenge, organized by the NEPAD Secretariat. Tel (27-11) 313-3153, fax (27-11) 313-3778, e-mail <fertilizersummit@nepad.org>, website <www.africafertilizersummit.org>

10–12 July 2006, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) – 5th World Congress of African Linguistics, organized by the Department of Linguistics, Addis Ababa University, on the theme "The fate of African Languages in the World of Globalization." E-mail <afriling@dling.aau.edu.et>, website <http://www.aau.edu.et/faculties/linguistics/wocal.htm>

13–18 August 2006, Toronto (Canada) – XVI International AIDS Conference. Expected to bring together over 20,000 delegates to share current knowledge on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. Contact Bryan Hobson, tel (41-22) 7 100 800, fax (41-22) 7 100 899, e-mail <info@aids2006.org>, website <www.aids2006.org>

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

6–8 March 2006, Brazzaville (Republic Congo) – Regional Consultation on Scalin up towards Universal Access to HIV an AIDS Prevention, Treatment, Care and Sup port in Africa. Under the auspices of the Afi can Union. Contact Samuel Ajibola, tel (24 653 7022, e-mail <ajibolas@afrowho.int>

9–12 April 2006, Oxford University, Oxfor (UK) – World Ethics Forum. Sponsored b the World Bank, International Institute for Pub lic Ethics, UN University and the UK's Depar ment for International Development. Conta Derek Warren, tel (44) 7932-607-469, e-ma <Dwarren@worldbank.org>, or Christia Hofer, tel (202) 458-0936, e-mail <chofer@worldbank.org>, website <www.worldbank.org/publicsector/leadershipconference>

10–14 April 2006, Brazzaville (Republic Congo) – First African Union Conference fo Ministers in Charge of Railway Transpor On the theme "For an Efficient Railway Trans port System at the Service of Development an African Integration." Contact Wynne Musa bayana, tel (242) 554-1590, website <www.africa-union.org/root/au/index/index.htm>

20–21 April 2006, Miami (USA) – 17th Glo bal Warming International Conference an Expo. Contact Sinyan Shen, tel (1-630) 910 1551, fax (1-630) 910-1561, e-mail <gw17@globalwarming.net>, website <http://global warming.net/>

AFRICA BOOKS

Rwanda's Genocide: The Politics of Global Justice by Kingsley Moghalu (Palgrave Macmillian, New York, USA, 2005; 239 pp; hb £25, $39.95)

Rwanda 1994: Les politiques du génocide à Butare by André Guichaoua (Karthala, Paris, France, 2005; 102 pp; pb €32)

African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development, ed. Thandika Mkandawire (Zed Books, London, UK, 2005; 256 pp; hb £65, $65, pb £18.95, $29.95)

Le Défi de l'armée républicaine en République Démocratique du Congo by Mwayila Tshiyembe (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2005; 138 pp; pb €13)

The African Union: Pan-Africanism, Peacebuilding and Development by Timothy Murithi (Ashgate Publishers, London, UK, 2005; 182 pp; hb £55)

Challenging Hegemony: Social Movements and the Quest for a New Humanism in Post-apartheid South Africa by Nigel Gibson (Africa World Press, Trenton, NJ, USA, 2006; 298 pp; pb £18.99)

Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights and the New War on the Poor by Paul Farmer (University of California Press, California, USA, 2004; 420 pp; pb $15.95)

Crises et recompositions d'une agriculture pionnière en Côte d'Ivoire, eds. Eric Leonard and Patrice Vimard (Karthala, Paris, France, 2005; 368 pp; pb €28)

Economic Growth in the 1990s: Learning from a Decade of Reform by the World Bank (World Bank Publications, Washington, USA, 2005; pb $35)

South Africa and the Logic of Regional Cooperation by James J. Hentz (Indiana University Press, Indiana, USA, 2006; 256 pp; hb $65, pb $24.95)

Eyes on Africa: A Fifty Year Commentary by Ronald Watts (The Ebor Press, York, England, 2005; 184 pp; pb £8)

The Fate of Africa's Democratic Experiments: Elites and Institutions, eds. Leonardo A. Villalón and Peter VonDoepp (Indiana University Press, Indiana, USA, 2006; 352 pp; hb $60, pb $24.95)

Le Financement dans les systèmes éducatifs d'Afrique subsaharienne, eds. Jean Bernard Rasera, Jean-Pierre Jarousse et al (CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal, 2005; 200 pp; pb £16.95, $24.95)

Global Corruption Report 2006 by Transparency International (Pluto Press, UK, 2005; 384 pp; pb £19.99)

L'islam politique au sud du Sahara: Identités, discours et enjeux, ed. Muriel Gomez-Perez (Karthala, Paris, France, 2005; 648 pp; pb €32)

From Sovereign Impunity to International Accountability: The Search for Justice i a World of States, eds. Ramesh Thakur an Peter Malcontent (UN University Press, Tokyo Japan, 2004; 324 pp; pb $33)

Legitimizing Human Rights NGOs: Les sons from Nigeria by Obiora Chinedu Okafo (Africa World Press, Trenton, NJ, USA, 2006 258 pp; hb $99.95, pb $29.95, £15.99)

African Women and Globalisation: Dawn o the 21st Century, ed. Jepkorir Rose Chepya tor-Thomson (Africa World Press, Trenton, NJ USA, 2005; 320 pp; pb £15.99)

Mali-France: Regards sur une histoire par tagée by GEMDEV/Université du Mali (Kar thala, Paris, France, 2005; 584 pp; pb €32)

The Decline of Capitalism: Can a Self-Regu lated Profits System Survive? by Harry Shut (Zed Books, London, UK, 2004; 176 pp; hb £32.95, $55, pb £9.99, $17.50)

Problèmes de regroupement des villages bété, Côte d'Ivoire: Contribution à l'analyse des obstacles socioculturels au développement by Boniface Gbaya Ziri (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2005; 202 pp; pb €17.5)

Amadou Hampâté Bâ: homme de science et de sagesse by Amadou Touré and Ntji Idriss Mariko (Karthala, Paris, France, 2005; 350 pp; pb €26)

The Paternalism of Partnership: A Postcolonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid by Maria Eriksson Baaz (Zed Books, London, UK, 2005; 224 pp; hb £45, $69.95, pb £14.95, $22.50)

AFRICA IN BRIEF

UN, African Bank in $217 mn urban water programme

The UN Human Settlements Programme and the African Development Bank (ADB) have announced a joint programme to generate investments of nearly $600 mn over five years to supply clean water to Africa's fast-growing cities and towns. The agreement, signed 23 March, will provide $217 mn in grants to improve the quality and supply of water for drinking, industry and sanitation in urban areas, which may well account for more than half of Africa's population by 2030. The grants are expected to be followed by an additional $362 mn in loans from the ADB for drinking water and sanitation projects to help Africa make progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of halving the percentage of people without access to clean water by 2015.

The Fourth World Water Forum, held in Mexico City in March, estimated that $20 bn annually is needed to achieve Africa's development targets for water by 2015. To date, Africa has developed less than 4 per cent of its available water for drinking and sanitation, irrigation and power generation. High poverty rates and infrastructure costs have hampered the continent's ability to harness its water resources. Only about 6 per cent of farmland is irrigated, while just 4 per cent of Africa's electricity supply comes from hydro power. Despite a range of African programmes to develop the continent's water assets, including the African Water Forum and the infrastructure plan of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), progress has been slow. ■

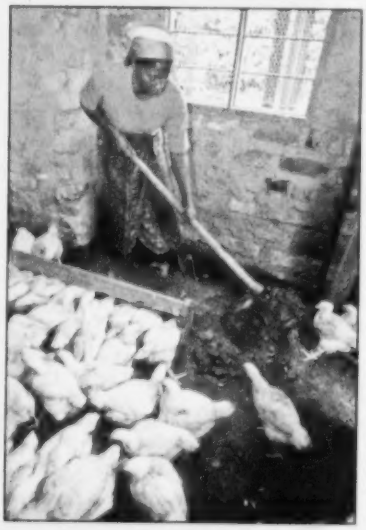
African farmland in "crisis"

A forthcoming report on African soil quality finds that more than 75 per cent of farmland in sub-Saharan Africa is severely depleted. Such depletion produces yields less than a third of the Asian and Latin American averages and contributes to a "soils health crisis" and rural poverty. The study by the International Fertilizer Development Centre, to be released at a major conference in June (see Agenda, page 22), argues that if present trends continue, the food shortfall will require African imports of staple foods to nearly double by 2020 to $14 bn.

More than 100,000 hectares of African forests and savannah are lost each year as farmers plough new land to replace exhausted fields. High costs and transportation difficulties mean that African farmers on average apply only a fifth of the amount of fertilizer needed to replenish vital nutrients in the soil.

Speaking at the Rockefeller Foundation in New York on 30 March, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo declared that "Africa needs giant steps" towards improved crop harvests. He was joined by African Union Commission Chairman Alpha Oumar Konaré, NEPAD Chief Executive Firmino Mucavele and African Development Bank President Donald Kaberuka to support the study and reflect growing concern in Africa about the deepening crisis in agriculture. ■

Africa needs funds to fight bird flu



In March, UN agencies and 45 African governments vowed to expand health facilities and surveillance services to improve efforts to combat "bird flu." At the meeting in Libreville, Gabon, the biggest bird flu conference in Africa to date, African delegates agreed that their countries should carry out internationally approved measures to fight the virus and establish a committee to monitor implementation that would include representatives of the African Union and UN agencies. The challenge now, says the UN coordinator for avian influenza, Mr. David Nabarro, is to raise the resources so desperately needed to carry out those efforts.

The virus can be controlled if infected animals are culled and farmers compensated for their losses, Mr. Nabarro told *Africa Renewal*. However, African governments say they "don't have the resources in their own countries to mount effective control operations, to compensate people who lose their chickens and other poultry, to communicate essential messages to the people and to prepare health services for human cases" in the event of a pandemic, said the senior UN system coordinator for avian and human influenza.

In January, donors pledged $1.9 bn to help developing countries boost surveillance and strengthen health and veterinary services to control the disease. However, this money is primarily directed to Asia, where bird flu was concentrated at the time of the pledging conference. "What we are doing now is warning the world that African countries also need resources, quickly, and in a way that they can access easily," explained Mr. Nabarro. Delays of even a few weeks can be catastrophic, he said.

So far, four African countries — Cameroon, Egypt, Niger and Nigeria — have confirmed cases of H5N1 bird flu and the continent's first human death has been reported in Egypt. The Libreville conference noted that Africa needs at least three more veterinary laboratories and three more human health laboratories capable of determining the H- and N- sub-types of bird flu, crucial in evaluating risk and tracking the spread of the dangerous H5N1 strain. Currently, most samples have to be sent abroad for testing.

World Bank officials warn that the economic impact on Africa could be grave, judging by the experience in Asia. By mid-2005, more than 140 mn birds had died or were destroyed to contain the disease in Asia, accounting for $10 bn in losses. In Nigeria alone, there are more than 100 mn birds, many of them owned by poor rural dwellers whose livelihoods depend on raising poultry.

AFRICA WATCH

HUMAN RIGHTS

UN sets up new rights body

In May, the UN General Assembly will elect 47 member states to the newly created Human Rights Council, to replace the often-criticized Human Rights Commission. The creation of the council "marks a new beginning for all the UN's human rights work," states Secretary-General Kofi Annan. "There is every reason to hope that the new council will combine the best features of the old system with some much-needed changes."

One of the criticisms of the old Human Rights Commission was that its rules made it too easy for countries that did not uphold human rights standards to gain seats on the body and then use it to deflect censure of violations by themselves or their allies.

In the March vote, 170 member states were in favour of creating the council, four voted against and three abstained. The US voted against, said the country's ambassador to the UN, Mr. John Bolton, because the resolution did not go far enough to "keep gross abusers of human rights off the council." The US favoured an earlier proposal that members be individually elected by a two-thirds majority, rather than the absolute majority stipulated by the resolution. Mr. Bolton nevertheless pledged that his country would work cooperatively with others to make the council as effective as possible. ■

WAR CRIMES

Liberian ex-president accused

The former president of Liberia, Mr. Charles Taylor, was formally charged with crimes against humanity and other offences by the UN-supported Special Court for Sierra Leone on 3 April. He thus became the first former head of state in Africa to be officially charged with violations of international human rights laws. Specifically, he has been accused in connection with his alleged role in leading or supporting rebel movements in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.

Mr. Taylor's appearance in the Freetown courtroom was the latest chapter in a 16-year saga of war, brutality and pillage that engulfed much of the region, took 300,000 lives and saw the former guerrilla commander go from head of state (1997-2003) to exile to accused war criminal. Mr. Taylor was initially granted asylum by Nigeria in 2003 as part of an agreement to end the Liberian civil war. He was handed over to UN peacekeeping troops in Liberia by the Nigerian government at the request of the newly elected Liberian president, Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and immediately transferred to Freetown. ■

WAR CRIMES

ICC arrests Congolese militia leader

The International Criminal Court (ICC) announced in March that it had arrested the leader of an armed group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on charges of war crimes. The arrest of the leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), Thomas Lubanga, comes almost two years after the court announced the start of investigations there. The court has found reasonable grounds to believe that Mr. Lubanga, who was in the DRC's custody, was involved in enlisting "children under the age of fifteen years and using them to participate actively in hostilities."

The ICC, based in The Hague, in the Netherlands, has broad international support. Currently, 100 countries have ratified the Rome Statute, which came into force in July 2002, establishing the court. In October 2005, the court issued its first arrest warrants, for several leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, although they are not yet in custody. Mr. Lubanga is therefore the first person to be arrested and transferred to the ICC.

Because the ICC will only prosecute those bearing the greatest responsibility for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed after July 2002, it will likely prosecute only a few high-ranking perpetrators. ■

APPOINTMENTS

UN / Eskinder Debebe

Mr. **Mark Malloch Brown** *of the UK has been named by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan as his deputy secretary-general, effective April 2006, replacing Ms. Louise Fréchette. Just prior to his appointment, Mr. Malloch Brown served as chef de cabinet to the Secretary-General, and before that was head of the UN Development Programme from 1999 to 2005. Previously, he was a World Bank vice-president and deputy chief of the Emergency Unit of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, undertaking missions in the Horn of Africa and Central America.*

The UN General Assembly, acting upon the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General, has elected Mr. **Achim Steiner** *of Germany as the new executive director of the UN Environment Programme, for a four-year term starting on 15 June 2006. He succeeds Klaus Toepfer. At the time of his appointment, Mr. Steiner was director-general of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), a position he has held since 2001. His previous positions included serving as secretary-general of the World Commission on Dams and as chief technical adviser on a programme for sustainable management of the Mekong River watersheds.*

UN / Michelle Pons

Mr. **Kjell Magne Bondevik**, *Norway's former prime minister, has been appointed by the UN Secretary-General as his special humanitarian envoy for the Horn of Africa. He succeeds Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, a former president of Finland, who in turn becomes special envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Future Status of Kosovo. At the time of his selection, Mr. Bondevik served as president of the Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights. Among other positions, Mr. Bondevik served previously as Norway's minister of foreign affairs (1989-1990), among other cabinet positions.*

The UN Secretary-General has appointed Mr. **Nobuaki Tanaka** *of Japan as the new under-secretary-general for disarmament affairs, succeeding Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, effective 6 April 2006. Most recently, Mr. Tanaka has been Japan's ambassador to Pakistan. A seasoned diplomat, Mr. Tanaka has also served as an assistant director-general of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and a deputy director-general in Japan's Foreign Ministry.*